

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-26. Canceled

27. (Currently Amended) An isolated nucleotide sequence, or its complement, wherein the isolated nucleotide sequence encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No: 15 or a fragment thereof comprising at least 400 contiguous amino acids of SEQ ID. No: 15 encoding an effective portion of a class A starch branching enzyme (SBE) obtainable from potato plants.

28. (Currently Amended) The isolated nucleotide sequence according to claim 27, ~~encoding a polypeptide comprising substantially~~ wherein the nucleotide sequence encodes the amino acid sequence of residues 49 to 882 of 56 to 889 of SEQ ID No: 15 ~~the sequence shown in Figure 5.~~

29. (Currently Amended) The isolated nucleotide sequence according to claim 27 ~~or 28~~, comprising ~~substantially the sequence of nucleotides 289 to 2790 of~~ SEQ ID No: 14 ~~the sequence shown in Figure 5, or a functional equivalent thereof.~~

30. (Currently Amended) The nucleotide sequence according to claim 29, further comprising the sequence of nucleotides 145 to 288 of SEQ ID No: 14 ~~the sequence shown in Figure 5, or a functional equivalent thereof.~~

31. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleotide sequence, or its complement, ~~according to claim 27, comprising the sequence of nucleotides 228 to 2855 of the sequence labelled~~ labeled psbe2con.seq in Figure 8 (nucleotides 272 to 2899 of SEQ ID No: 18), ~~or a functional equivalent thereof.~~

32. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleotide sequence, or its complement ~~according to claim 27~~, comprising the sequence of nucleotides 57 to 2564 of the sequence ~~labelled~~ labeled as psbe2con.seq in Figure 12 (nucleotides 57 to 2564 of SEQ ID No: 19), ~~or a functional equivalent thereof~~.

33. (Currently Amended) The nucleotide sequence according to any one of claims 27 to 32, comprising an in-frame ATG start codon, and optionally including a 5' and/or a 3' untranslated region.

34. (Currently Amended) The nucleotide sequence according to claim 27, comprising the sequence of nucleotides 45 to 3200 of the sequence ~~labelled~~ labeled as psbe2con.seq in Figure 8 (nucleotides 1 to 3156 of SEQ ID No: 18), ~~or a functional equivalent thereof~~.

35. (Currently Amended) A nucleic acid construct comprising an isolated nucleotide sequence in accordance claim 27.

36. (Currently Amended) An expression vector comprising a nucleic acid construct according to claim 35.

37. (Previously Amended) A host cell into which has been introduced an isolated nucleotide sequence in accordance with claim 27.

38.-41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently Amended) A method of altering the characteristics of a plant, comprising introducing into the plant ~~a portion of an isolated~~ an isolated nucleotide sequence in accordance with claim 27, operably linked to a suitable promoter active in the plant, so as to affect the expression of a gene present in the plant.

43. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 42, wherein the nucleotide sequence is operably linked in the anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the plant.

44. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 42, wherein the introduced sequence comprises at least one region selected from the group consisting of a 5' untranslated region, a 3' untranslated region, and a coding region of the potato ~~SBE~~-class A starch branching enzyme **(SBE)** operably linked in the sense orientation to a promoter active in the plant, so as to cause sense suppression of an enzyme naturally expressed in the plant.

45. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 42, further comprising introducing into the plant one or more further sequences.

46. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 45, wherein one or more of the further sequences are operably linked in the anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the plant.

47. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 45, wherein the further sequence comprises a portion of a class B SBE nucleotide sequence.

48. (Previously Amended) The method according claim 42 or 47, effective in altering the starch composition of a plant.

49. (Currently Amended) A plant, **or the progeny of such a plant, or part of such a plant,** or **a** plant cell **each** having characteristics altered by the method of claim 42 or 47, ~~or the progeny of such a plant, or part of such a plant.~~

50. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, selected from ~~one of the following:~~ **the group consisting of** potato, pea, tomato, maize, wheat, rice, barley, sweet potato, and cassava.

51. (Previously Amended) A tuber or other storage organ from a plant according to claim 49.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has an elevated viscosity onset temperature as judged by viscoamylograph ~~conducted according to the protocol defined in claim 7,~~ compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant, wherein the viscoamylograph is performed at atmospheric pressure using the Newport Scientific Rapid Visco Analyser 3C with a heating profile of holding at 50° C for 2 minutes, heating from 50° C to 95° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, holding at 95° C for 15 minutes, cooling from 95° C to 50° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, and then holding at 50° C for 15 minutes.

54. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 53, wherein the viscosity onset temperature is elevated by an amount in the range of 10 to 25°C.

55. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has a decreased peak viscosity as judged by viscoamylograph ~~conducted according to the protocol defined in claim 7,~~ compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant, wherein the viscoamylograph is performed at atmospheric pressure using the Newport Scientific Rapid Visco Analyser 3C with a heating profile of holding at 50° C for 2 minutes, heating from 50° C to 95° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, holding at 95° C for 15 minutes, cooling from 95° C to 50° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, and then holding at 50° C for 15 minutes.

56. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 55, wherein the peak viscosity is decreased by an amount in the range of 240 to 700 SNUs.

57. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has an increased pasting viscosity as judged by viscoamylograph ~~conducted according to the protocol defined in claim 7,~~ compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant, wherein the viscoamylograph is performed at atmospheric pressure using the Newport Scientific Rapid Visco Analyser 3C with a heating profile of holding at 50° C for 2 minutes, heating from 50° C to 95° C at a

**rate of 1.5° C per minute, holding at 95° C for 15 minutes, cooling from 95° C to 50° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, and then holding at 50° C for 15 minutes.**

58. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 57, wherein the pasting viscosity is increased by an amount in the range of 37 to 260 SNUs.

59. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has an increased set-back viscosity as judged by viscoamylograph ~~conducted according to the protocol defined in claim 7,~~ compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant, **wherein the viscoamylograph is performed at atmospheric pressure using the Newport Scientific Rapid Visco Analyser 3C with a heating profile of holding at 50° C for 2 minutes, heating from 50° C to 95° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, holding at 95° C for 15 minutes, cooling from 95° C to 50° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, and then holding at 50° C for 15 minutes.**

60. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 59, wherein the set-back viscosity is increased by an amount in the range of 224 to 313 SNUs.

61. (Currently Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has a decreased set-back viscosity as judged by viscoamylograph ~~conducted according to the protocol defined in claim 7,~~ compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant, **wherein the viscoamylograph is performed at atmospheric pressure using the Newport Scientific Rapid Visco Analyser 3C with a heating profile of holding at 50° C for 2 minutes, heating from 50° C to 95° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, holding at 95° C for 15 minutes, cooling from 95° C to 50° C at a rate of 1.5° C per minute, and then holding at 50° C for 15 minutes.**

62. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant by wet milling at ambient temperature, has an elevated apparent amylose content as judged by iodometric assay according to the method of Morrison & Laignelet, compared to starch extracted from a similar, but unaltered, plant.

63. (Previously Amended) The plant according to claim 49, containing starch which, as extracted from the plant, has a phosphorus content in excess of 200 mg/100 grams dry weight starch.

64-66. (Cancelled)

67. (Original) A potato plant or part thereof which, in its wild type possesses an effective SBE A gene, but which plant has been altered such that there is no effective expression of an SBE A polypeptide within the cells of at least part of the plant.

68. (Previously Amended) A potato plant or part thereof which, in its wild type possesses an effective SBE A gene, but which plant has been altered such that there is no effective expression of an SBE A polypeptide within the cells of at least part of the plant, wherein the alteration is effected by a method according to claim 42 or 47.

69.-72. (Canceled)

73. (Previously Amended) The nucleotide sequence of claim 33, further comprising a 5' and/or a 3' untranslated region.

74. (Canceled)